

A

# REVIEW

## OF THE

# STATE

## OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Saturday, May 10. 1712.

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I Have enter'd upon a point which few People seem willing to comprehend, viz, How the *Dissenters* shall bring Good out of Evil; how they shall make the late *Occasional Bill* turn to their Advantage, and as above, cause it to turn to the Destruction of that *Haman*, the *High Tory Party* that contriv'd it, or to the Confusion of those *False Brethren* that gave them up as a Sacrifice.

I have said all that can be needful, concerning the Nature of this Law; it is none of my Business to pass Censures upon the Legislature; what ever I think of its consistency with Reason, with Justice, with the

Constitution, and with Capitulated Right, in all which I have Explain'd myself, this is not a Place or a Time to explain myself, the Law is pass'd, the Enquiry is, What follows? What shall be the Consequence? *My Notions* are, That if the *Dissenters* are wise, all the Mischief design'd against their Religious Circumstances, may be Disappointed.

The *Dissenters* by this Law are Overthrown in their *Party-Capacity*, in their Political Interests, and they cannot in their Senses, act again in Conjunction with any Party, as they did before; *High-Church* they reject, and *Low-Church* has cast them off;

off; the first they have an Aversion of Principle to, and it is impossible a *Dissenter*, as such, can, while his Wits are trusted to his own keeping, fall in with the *High Flying Church-Men*, either in Party or Principle: *Low-Church* they may wish well to, but the mutual Confidence can never be restor'd, since he that has once betray'd me, I can never trust again, while I have any Claim to common Sense; What then remains to them? I think their Case is clear.

In their Politick Circumstances, as above, like a Resolute Garrison, the *Outworks and Palisadoes of their Fortification* being taken, they retire within the Body of the Place, make *Coupees, Retrenchments, and Barricadoes* within, as the last Refuge, resolving to maintain themselves there, till Relief comes, or the Enemy, weakened by their furious and unskilful Attacks, grow faint in their pushing on the Siege, and then they fall out, and recover their *Out-works* again.

These Retrenchments, and this last Resort of the *Dissenters*, I call their Religious Concerns, and their Forming themselves into a Body, as *Dissenters*, Enquiring what is their proper Interest, as such, and pursuing it by the harmless, lawful, proper, and necessary Means, which God, and the Constitution of the Government they live under, gives them leave to make use of; if this will restore their Circumstances, their Character, their Reputation, and the Figure they formerly made in the World, then, if the *Dissenting* Interest sinks, it is their own Fault and their own Neglect which is the Cause.

The Author of the *Protestant Post-Boy* says in his last Paper very well; *Toleration, Property, and Succession being secur'd*, Things are come to a point with us, that so long as these *Essential and Fundamental Parts* are safe—It is of small Concern to private Men, what particular Set of Men shall be at the Helm: In some Sense this is very right, and especially as it may relate to the *Dissenters*: I would have the *Dissenters* now look upon themselves in the Capacity their Enemies esteem them to be, and which in-

deed they are, viz. *Private Men*: In this Capacity on one Hand, all the Calumny, Reproach, and Slander thrown upon them, of their Undermining the Church, must cease; their being a *Reckless Faction*, and the like Virulent Terms, these must die of course; the *Dissenters* can now be dangerous to no-body, for they are *No-body*, in respect to the Government, they are divested of all Power and Influence, and you have Reduc'd them to the Capacity of private Men, no way Concern'd in publick Matters; if the Government miscarries now, it is all in your own Hands, Gentlemen of the Church, take it among you, the *Dissenters* can have no blame.

It behoves the *Dissenters* now, to look to their private Interest, as *Dissenters*, and to form themselves into such a Cemented Constitution, I mean *Religious*, as may give them a due Weight in all Matters relating to themselves; as to Things relating to Government, they are not Concern'd; but as you *High-Church Men*, have Separated them from you, 'tis hop'd you will also Separate yourselves from them; neither Trade with them; Marry with them, Employ them; neither lend or borrow of them, and let us see where it will End; stand all upon your own Feet, as you govern without them, you ought to ask no help of them; nor, a Dutiful Compliance with Legal Impositions excepted, can they have any Thing to do with you. Now to begin with Trade;

Are ye, Gentlemen of the *High-Church*, able to Employ, or Relieve, all your own Poor? Have you Trade enough to set them all to Work? or Alms enough to subsist those that you cannot Employ? If you have, go on to the Tryal; if you have not, then, whenever the *Dissenters* shall begin to Trade, Employ, Marry, and serve one among another Exclusively, they Rein all this Babel you have built, and you shall come creeping to the *Dissenters* again, Preach Charity and mutual Confidence, a Union of Affection, and a Union of Interest, for the common Good of the Nation: This one Step effectually follow'd, would reconcile you all again

again to the *Dissenters*, or carry away two Millions of your poor Commons, from the Church to the Meeting-Houses, Ruin all your Corporations in *England*, and Convince you, that to oppress the *Dissenters* is the worst Step in your Politicks you can ever take.

If I was to Argue what would be the Consequence of a general Popular Resolution among the *Dissenters*, not to Trade with, Employ, or any Way deal among any but their own People, the Confusions would be unspeakable that were to follow, tho' I must own, in the End, the Advantage would be to the *Dissenters*.

But I am not for having the *Dissenters* go upon any Thing that may Encrease the publick Distractions; I am not for making a kind of a Faction in Trade; the *Dissenters* enjoy the Protection of the Government, the Liberties of the Constitution, except as lately excepted; I am far from moving them to any Thing that should disturb the Civil Government, and therefore when I speak of Governing before, and the *Dissenters* having nothing to do with them, I am to be understood the Corporation Governments, of which, what Treatment the *Dissenters* have from them, how they are Insulted by them, and how, now, entirely excluded from them, is known to every one.

The Sum of the matter is this; would the *Dissenters* act wisely, they might soon make these People sensible of their mistake, and I'll explain my Meaning, by a certain Story, relating to a Village in a certain place, since grown up to a great Town, the Application is for any one to make that pleases.

A certain Corporation Town having a bundance of poor, a large Manufacture, and great Trade, was thus statèd: The Magistrates, Mayor, Aldermen, and Town-Council were all Church-Men, the *Master Manufacturers* were generally *Dissenters*, at least, being about 12 in Number, 9 of them were *Dissenters*, and the other 3 were of the smallest Business; so that the Govern-

ment of the Town was Tory, the Trade Whig.

The Times run hard upon the *Dissenters*, the Laws were put in Execution against them in most Places; and the Magistrates, egg'd on by the Parson, fell upon them here also; two Meeting Houses which they had in the Town, were immediately Demolish'd, many of the People sent to Prison, their Ministers driven 5 Miles off by the Corporation-Act, and the chief of the *Dissenters* Prosecuted in the Ecclesiastick Courts to Excommunication, seizing of their Goods and all manner of Extremities.

A Gentleman about six Miles from the place, who was a *Dissenter*, and had a good Estate in that Country, Invited two of the Principal Persecuted Trades-men to shelter with him, and gave them two Houses Rent-free in his Village; their two Ministers, he entertain'd in his House, and there they Preached every Sabbath Day to the said Trades-men—The two Trades-men finding themselves easie here, which they could not be in the Neighbouring Corporation, soon removed their Families and Working Servants, and settled in the Village; such of the Weavers and other Work People, as were depending upon them for Employment, soon follow'd them; the Poor of the Village immediately found the sweet of it: In a short Time, 3 more of the Masters, with all their *Wives*, follow'd the Example, and in less than two Year, all the Nine *Master Manufacturers* removed, so that the Village could not receive the People that follow'd; some built Houses, the Lord of the Mannor letting them Land, and giving them all imaginable Encouragement.

In the mean time, the Persecution of *Dissenters* slackened, and they began to Preach openly in their New Town; this also drew many from the Corporation-Town, and the Trade Entreating with the People, the Village grew up to a great Town; all this while, the great Corporation-Town decay'd and declin'd, the Employment of the People was gone, and the Weight

Weight of the Poor not only remain'd but encreas'd, infomuch, that the Parish Poor's Rate doubled; the People run all away, not to the Village only, but to the Meeting-House too, to make their Court to the Masters for Work; those that could not Work, or could not get Work, remain'd for the Town to maintain — The People in the Village remembring how they had been us'd; Encourag'd chiefly those that were *Dissenters*, so that Hundreds went to the Meeting-House who us'd to go to Church, for fear of losing their Work; by the Industry of some and Charity of others, all their real Poor were provided for, and the few that remain'd in the Tory-Corporation, serv'd only to shew the Ruins

of a good Town, and the fatal Effects of Cruelty and Persecution; some Corporations in England, besides C—— may take a hint from this Story.

I make no Application; I am not prescribing to the *Dissenters* entirely to distinguish themselves from the Church-Men in Trade; but I do say this, that would they where no visible rational Difficulty occurs, Trade with one another a little more than they do, it would be the first step to Encreasing their Number and Establishing their Interest in this Nation; and if the High-Church Men drive them to Extremities the above is a good Example for them.

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